

Malaysia-Singapore high-speed rail link
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SINGAPORE: Malaysia and Singapore have agreed to build a high-speed rail link between the city state and Kuala Lumpur.

The link will cut travelling time between the two destinations to just 90 minutes, from the hours it now takes by rail and road.

The two countries also agreed on a rapid transit system linking Singapore's Mass Rapid Transit system with Johor Baru.

Both Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and his counterpart Lee Hsien Loong described the speed-link project as a "game changer" .

"This project will change the way we do business, look at each other and interact," said Najib.

"We hope to meet the 2020 deadline for the project," he told a joint press conference after the annual leaders retreat here.

The two mass "people mover" projects are part of multi-billion ringgit business deals between the two countries.

These include a wellness project at Nusajaya in Johor and a mixed development project between Iskandar Waterfront Holdings Sdn Bhd and the Singapore Government investment arm Temasek in Danga Bay worth RM8.1bil.

Najib said the high-speed rail link would be built via public-private partnership with strong government participation.

"It will be on the basis of private sector funding with the government providing structural support and participation."

Lee said the project would make it faster to travel between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore by rail than by air, including waiting time.

He recalled that Najib mooted the idea of the link at a meeting some months ago and he felt that it was a good idea.

On the rapid transit system, Lee said the two countries had 12 months to decide on whether to build a bridge or an undersea tunnel between the two countries.

Later the two leaders unveiled the Marina One project, which is in the heart of Singapore's new central business district undertaken by M+S Pte Ltd, a company owned 60:40 by Khazanah Holdings Bhd and Temasek.

They were also updated on the integrated development DUO joint venture. The two projects have a gross development value of S\$11bil (RM26.4bil).

The leaders lauded the excellent progress in relations between the two countries since the Points of Agreement was settled in 2010.

In a three page statement, they agreed to intensify existing cooperation and explore new ways to leverage on the complementarities between Singapore and Iskandar, just across the island republic.

They agreed among others to look into the feasibility of a third road link between the two countries in the long term, and establishing new ferry terminal and Customs, Immigration and Quarantine facilities at Puteri Harbour in Johor this year.

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